

2017 Longwall USA Exhibition and Conference



Steve Fiscor



First Technical Session Gets Underway

“Standing Strong” was the theme of 2017 Longwall USA Exhibition & Conference, which was held June 13-15, in its traditional home of the David L. Lawrence Convention Center in downtown Pittsburgh, PA. Since 1985, Longwall USA has become the place to be for professionals in or connected with the technique of longwall mining and this year was no exception. The mood of the attendees was noticeably upbeat as order books begin to fill once again with the end of the war on coal and an Administration who believes in our industry.

This was the first Longwall USA to be held since Steve Fiscor formed a new company, Mining Media International, at the end of last year and acquired Coal Age from publisher Peter Johnson. Johnson has served the coal industry well since rescuing Coal Age from the ash heap of history in 2003 while Fiscor has been involved in the coal industry for a lifetime. He has solidly become a leading and well-respected figure in coal mining journalism over many years and we congratulate him on now entering the field of publishing.

At the Conference, there was great interest in the very first presentation “First Chinese Shields in the US at Oak Gove Mine” by Don Simms, President and CEO, United Mining Equipment. Seminole Coal’s Oak Grove mine in Alabama working in conjunction with UME, ZMJ the manufacturer of the shields, and Tiffenbach, who supplied the controls, was the first American coal mine to install Chinese shields.

Guesses varied around the exhibition floor on the dollar savings made possible by this transaction, but it is very clear that shields probably costing about half of the traditional amount have made a major contribution to saving millions and reducing the cost per ton at Oak Grove. This development has undoubtedly sent a shiver up the backs of traditional manufacturers of shields and the obvious question now is will the Chinese extend their marketing efforts to other equipment such as longwall face conveyors.

The Conference included sessions on “Equipment and Life Cycle Improvements”, “Health and Safety”, “Mine Development and Planning”, “Panel Discussion-Industry Advocates”, and “Operating Efficiencies” with the Longwall USA Committee under the direction of longtime Chairman John Murphy, University of Pittsburgh, doing its usual good job of producing an excellent and informative program for the attendees.

This year there were a total of 68 exhibitors showing everything to do with longwall mining including: shields, electronic control systems, face conveyors, gearboxes, fluid couplings, electric motors, cable handling systems, lighting, pumps, switchgear, and recovery systems. Also on display were: belt conveyors, conveyor belting, belt joints, locomotives, underground vehicles, roof bolts, and of course, importantly, a large selection of safety and health equipment and services. Together, manufacturers, suppliers and consultants put on a comprehensive

display of their wide range of products and services to make attendance at Longwall USA a very worthwhile experience.



Caterpillar



Strata Worldwide



KOMATSU



Longwall Mining Services



Quaker Chemical



Matrix



Huesker



UME



Jenmar



Longwall Associates



RM Wilson Co.



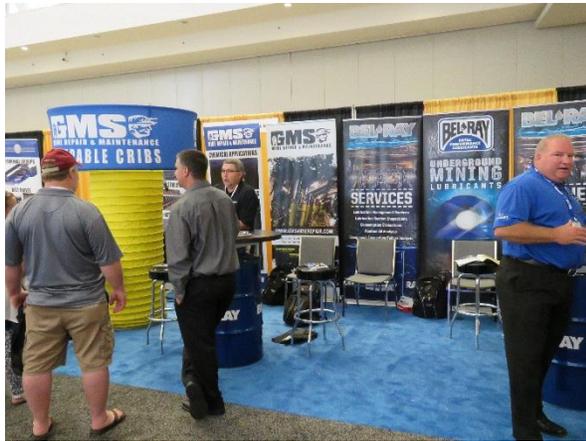
Richwood



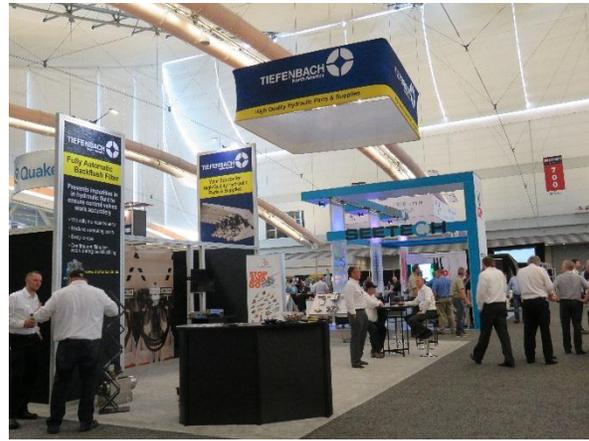
Brookville Mining Division



Fletcher Mining Equipment



GMS



Tiefenbach